

The Republican.

No. 14, Vol. 8.] LONDON, Friday, Oct. 10, 1823. [PRICE 6d.

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTY OF DORSET.

MILK-MAIDS, MATRONS AND LADIES, MEN AND LORDS,

Dorchester Gaol, Sept. 30, 1823.

BEING about to print some correspondences that have passed between the Sheriffs and Magistrates of this county and myself, I thought, that by way of commencing an acquaintance: it would be best to include them in this my first address to you.

Men, Matrons and Milk-Maids.—We will have nothing to do with you, or to say to you, Mr. Carlile. We are a loyal and a religious people; and you have been four years in our Gaol as a Blasphemer and Seditious. John King, the Waiter, at the King's Arms, in Dorchester, says you would overthrow our *blessed constitution*: and though he does not doubt but that you may be a very learned man, he will never approve of what you are doing. The Vicar of Cerne, and the Magistrates, Parsons and Gaoler, one and all, tell us, that you are calculated to corrupt every one to whom you speak: and that is the reason they have you locked up so close and will not allow us to see you. Mr. Pitt, the Postmaster, for Dorchester, calls you a "*rascally villain*" and all the bad names he has learnt these fifty years; and though he does not tell us why he does it; there must be something in it, or he would not do it. For these and sundry other reasons, we beg, Sir, that you will not seek to form any acquaintance with us: for, if we were to be corrupted by your writings and conversation, to lose our *blessed constitution in Church and State*, and those excellent men we have now got as Magistrates to take care of our lives and properties, and to keep us from the French, the Jacobins, the Infidels, and the Radicals, we should be miserable indeed!

Printed and Published by R. Carlile, 84, Fleet Street.

We now find that we can keep away from the Gaol and the Treadmill, if we do not disturb a stick in the hedges of their Worships and Reverences, nor destroy any of those animals which God Almighty has sent for their sports and pastimes: if we do not dance or make a noise for the Gentlemen to hear of it, nor be caught by the Exciseman and Custom House Officers in smuggling what the untaxed French can sell cheaper than us: (which we do after all, and sell it to their Worships and their Reverences!) if we only avoid all these things, and make proper obeisances with the proper countenance, when we meet their Worships and Reverences; then we can be as quiet as we like, and not offend those who are our betters, and who are in authority over us.

Richard Carlile.—Whether you will or not, an acquaintance, an interminable acquaintance shall commence between us. I have begun it with their Worships and their Reverences, and I will extend it to every inhabitant of the county. In spite of yourselves, I will communicate knowledge to you: and whatever John King the Waiter, or Joseph Pitt the Postmaster, may say or think, *they shall be made wiser*. I will improve your very Worships and Reverences: for they are sadly deficient in those materials of which common sense is made!

I am about to send round an agent to pay my respects to you, and to supply you with my publications; and this first address is to be something like a narrative of the treatment, I and my family have received in this Gaol; and an exhibition of the men who manage it.

I came to the Gaol in 1819, November 18th: the Gaoler, whom, at first sight, I took for a Country Taylor turned Methodist, was very civil to me, and most certainly treated me with all the outward respect that I could have wished. From eight in the morning until four in the afternoon I was detained in his office, or counting house. Here he offered to board me for two guineas and half per week. I readily embraced the offer, and thought, that, as a matter of course, I was to be a parlour boarder, or to sit at his table. He took care never to say a word about this part of the business. At four o'clock I was shewn into a very good room, for a Gaol room, in which the Gaoler had put a fire, a table, an armed, and another chair, a glass, wash-hand stand, bason and jug and a good bed. Well, thought I, this does not look amiss for a Gaol. The Gaoler sat down with me, told me that this was the room, the table and the armed chair which Mr. White had for three years. All seemed to sound

very well so far: and as I had had no rest for three nights, I began to look at the bed. The Gaoler rose and left me in a very polite manner, whilst inside the door; but to my surprise, when outside, he locked the door. I had been in three Gaols and had never seen any thing like that before. That was the first damper: the first subject for reflection. Tea came at six o'clock, poured out in a bason, and a plate of bread and butter, all very good: but, thought I, this does not look like two guineas and a half a week. When I first visited London as a Mechanic, I had been accustomed to pay sixpence for such a breakfast, or tea, as this. Supper I disclaimed: and hinted that I should go to bed.

In bed and asleep, sound enough without a dream or a fear, for any body or any thing, past, present, or future. About nine o'clock the lock of the door turned and in walked two men: what their business I knew not: one stood at the door with a lanthorn, and the other walked across and locked the water closet door! Beyond an Hallo! I said nothing: and as I did not know their business; I thought it as well to be quiet. They were not like the London turnkeys; not like Stephens, and Bishop, and Durant, and Morris, and the gruff old Filewood: no! these Dorsetshire men looked to me like perfect clowns, though they have since turned out to be very kind and very civil fellows in their way. Though they could see that I was not a Giant, or a Monster in appearance, they seemed to look and act with a caution, as if they doubted whether I was one little devil, or a condensed legion. Such is the effect of first impressions upon previously excited minds!

I heard nothing more until day light; and before I was out of bed, in came too real clouted characters with wood and coal. The water closet door was unlocked, a real blazing fire kindled, and all done with a sort of dumb motion, such as I have read of with those who waited upon the Knights and Ladies who were prisoners in Castles in the olden time. Perhaps some of them have been in Dorchester Castle before now. Not amiss, again, thought I, for a Gaol: but the locking and unlocking of the doors exceeded all my understanding. I had seen no such thing in the London Prisons. From that day to this I could never see nor hear a good reason for it. Tyrant custom, precedent, was all!

Breakfast came in the same state as the tea the evening before, good tea, well sweetened, excellent brown bread and butter; every thing exactly to my palate; but the sort of allowance, though enough, and the locking of the door,

seemed to say: "this does not suit two guineas and a half a week." I had known what it was to work for two guineas and a half; and I was not aware, that, in any one week of my life, had my belly cost me a pound, in a regular way of living, before I came to Dorchester Gaol.

Dinner was brought in the same way; only upon a more enlarged scale: always enough for two or three. This part of the matter seemed to correspond better: but the main thing was wanting. It was not the belly, but the mind and good exercise for the body that I wanted to be liberal to gratify and to obtain. Without this, all the rest was nothing to me. The Gaoler had told me, in his office, that he had an excellent gravelled walk for me, on which Gilbert Wakefield used to walk. I thanked him and said to myself, "you must be the best of all possible Gaolers!"

Locked up in the room, the first and second day passed; and not one word about the gravelled walk! Rather strange this, a breach of promise, without a reason! Deceit in the Gaoler! Ah! Why was he so civil to me and so insolent to other persons who were brought in as prisoners on the same day? Rather ominous! Civility for sale! Why were the feelings of that Naval Surgeon, a Debtor, so outraged, when he asked: "if, in the Gaol, he could hire a room and be permitted to have his wife and family with him?" "Naugh! nothing of the kind here: Robert, show him up to the Debtor's Ward!"

Little do Gaolers think what are the first impressions of their hapless prisoners, and their friends as visitors, on first entering a Gaol. Little do they feel; or they would not so rend every wounded bosom, and so outrage every sympathetic or affectionate feeling! Houses of Correction! No they are not. I have seen no correction but that which the horse gets: nothing that would correct a vicious dog. I have seen no moral improvement in this Gaol during my four years incarceration: and it is pretended that I am locked up close because I shall not corrupt the other prisoners! It may be right: for, there are quite enough about the Gaol qualified to corrupt them, without my assistance.

After being closely locked up two days, I found their Worships and Reverences had resolved, that I should only walk one hour every other day, or half an hour each day; or so much of that time as the Gaoler could attend, or send a guard after me. Three years imprisonment—two guineas and a half a week—and to walk half an hour a day. That wont do! These were the reflections that followed. The Gaoler protested that

he was a cipher in the Gaol; and that the Justices settled every thing. I did not like any of them the better for that.

I resolved to walk out, to know the plan of the Gaol, should necessity or utility urge an escape: and as soon as I had fully satisfied myself upon this head, I refused to submit any further, to such restraint and trifling. At the expiration of seven weeks, I broke up my boarding bargain with the Gaoler, after I had seen humanity outraged in the conduct of the Gaoler and Magistrates towards Mrs. Carlile and her month old infant, who had by that time visited me.

I complained to the Magistrates, to the Sheriff, and to Lord Sidmouth about my close confinement: but I soon found, that my complaint was joy, a sort of saving grace to them, and I was a chamber prisoner fifteen months.

In February, 1821, Mrs. Carlile was brought to the Gaol a Prisoner: and, after a long struggle, she got herself shown to my room. But not a word was said to her about walking out, although she had the infant then fifteen months old. The new Sheriff came about this time. I made a complaint to him, of which he took no notice: and at the Lent Assize I addressed him the following letter, of which he also took no notice.

TO MR. HIGH SHERIFF.

SIR, Dorchester Goal, March 17, 1821.

Your visit to me about a fortnight since, having taken me by surprise, I have thought that I might not have expressed my complaints to you as clearly and intelligibly as I could wish: and have therefore waited the close of the assize, when it is probable a letter may reach you in Dorchester, to state on paper those complaints which I have made and which I could wish you fully to understand.

There are two points on which I feel aggrieved. The first is that I am closely locked up within a room, and have no access to the open air, unless upon the condition of being ordered out and in at stated periods by a turnkey. The second is that a refusal has been made to many individuals to see me, some of whom have come long journies for that purpose, and other friends, knowing that such refusal has been made, have abstained from taking a journey upon such an uncertainty. This latter circumstance I consider to have been aggravated by the caprice of some individual or individuals: as the Keeper informed me about a month after I had been in the Gaol, that all friends would find admittance to see me. Upon this expression I gave a public notice that any friend of mine who might be passing this way would find no difficulty in seeing me.

Shortly after, a gentleman came purposely from London, and was refused admittance unless he could get an order from a Visiting Magistrate none of whom were to be found at the time, and he returned without seeing me; although he informed the Keeper that he should be content just to take me by the hand in his presence. About the same time, a young man, who is a first cousin of mine, on the maternal side, and whose father is a respectable Miller about twenty-five miles from this, on the borders of Devonshire, was deputed by his family to come and see me and to ascertain the cause of my confinement, of which from their retired station in life they were ignorant: he also was refused admittance. There are several other cases which I have heard, and others I expect to hear, as soon as an opportunity offers. This I contend is an unwarrantable restraint, for however grievous my conduct might appear to interested priests and bigots, I feel satisfied that a great majority of the inhabitants of this Island would pronounce that conduct rather meritorious than otherwise. My crime is the publication of a book or books which weigh against certain opinions, but which every examiner is compelled to acknowledge as strictly moral, and I would ask any liberal minded man, however opposite his opinions might be to mine, and I know there are liberal minded men of that description, whether he would sanction the restraint under which I am now placed.

I have taken the liberty, Mr. High Sheriff, to trouble you with this detail, as it is my intention to seek redress by an action at law at the expiration of my confinement: and, although, I verily believe that the order for this restraint has not emanated from the late High Sheriff, I shall have no alternative but to make him the Defendant. I am not aware that the law recognizes the authority of any other person over me whilst a prisoner in this Gaol, but that of the Sheriff and his Deputy the Keeper. The duty of a visiting Magistrate I understand to be; not to impose restraints but to take them off where he sees them unjustly imposed: to hear and redress, but not to originate complaints.

Doubtless you have been informed that Mrs. Carlile is a prisoner and I feel gratitude for the indulgence of having her in my room, we have an infant child about fifteen months old, who is also with us, and I am anxious, for the well being of the child, who ought not to be punished for the faults of his parents, to obtain the indulgence of having him occasionally carried out of the Prison for an airing. If you, Sir, can be so good to order me this latter favour, I shall feel further obliged, and I beg to assure you that I should not have troubled you with the foregoing detail, had I not known that you were interested in it, and had I not thought you would have heard nothing of the circumstance from any other quarter.

I feel bound to bear testimony to the good conduct of the turnkeys and the civility of the Keeper whenever they have occasion

to come to me, and I would not ask any indulgence that could operate against the general discipline and good order of the Gaol. I court not the company of the Prisoners, but would rather keep at a distance from them. I merely ask that myself and Mrs. Carlile should have an opportunity of breathing the open air in the day time unfettered as to the hour.

However, independent of our own wishes; we are anxious that the infant should not suffer on our account. It is, I know quite a common thing in all the London Prisons, for persons confined to have a servant to assist them if they can pay for it. For myself and Mrs. Carlile I want not a servant. It is simply a nurse maid for the child who might carry him out once in the day; a circumstance which I feel assured might be so managed as not to give any additional trouble to the servants of the Prison.

I would entreat Mr. High Sheriff, your favourable consideration of this letter and subscribe myself,

Your obedient Servant,

R. CARLILE.

To John White, Esq.,
High Sheriff of the County of Dorset.

So correct were my fears about the child, that the ensuing week, which was the sixth of close confinement, saw the child as near death as it was possible to be and to survive. The infant was dangerously ill several weeks: and this, calling the attention of the surgeon to our situation, he pleaded for the child's admission to the open air: which was obtained: and poor little Tom Paine had never a fair ground of complaint afterwards: though the Parson Justices, and your old representative Mr. Pitt, had been satiated with little short of the life of the child as a sacrifice.

The visit we received from the visiting Magistrates at the April Sessions of that year, when leave was given that we should employ a person, of whom the Gaoler should approve, to carry out the child, and be allowed to walk out two hours daily ourselves, was the only instance of their shewing a beam of humanity towards us: and that, I believe, to have been the result of fear, from the narrow escape which the child had had with its life.

Matters went on pretty well, until my Sister was brought to the Gaol at the end of the year: when this became a new matter of spite. We were all to be locked up in one room; and the wretches had the baseness to propose to partition that room to make a sleeping hole for my sister, even when there was a large empty room at hand! I wrote Mr. Pitt something in the shape of a civil remonstrance on this occa-

sion, and asked why she could not be allowed to sleep in the adjoining empty room. This was conceded for a few weeks until an old debtor woman, above threescore years old, came in; and my sister was then sent to pass the night in a felon's cell, on an iron bed stock, whilst the old lady was left in solitary confinement!

The delivery of Mrs. Carlile of a female infant took place on the 4th June 1822. The season was particularly hot, and, with the addition of the nurse, and a constant fire, though we had two rooms by this time, made our situation very painful. We had no current of air, and the rooms faced the sun. Under this state of things, I addressed the following letter to the Gaoler.

TO MR. ROBERT WILLIAMS ANDREWS, KEEPER OF
DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, June 6, 1822.

I TAKE the liberty respectfully to inform you, and through you the Sheriff and Visiting Magistrates of this Gaol, that it is my intention, in the ensuing week, to cause a motion to be made in the Court of King's Bench for a Rule, calling upon the authorities of this Gaol to shew cause, why Mrs. Carlile and Mary Ann Carlile should not, in the day-time, have free admission to the open air, as is the case with every other prisoner in the Gaol, excepting those who are sentenced to solitary confinement. I shall make no application on my own behalf, because, as I have before intimated, it is my intention to seek redress for the many unnecessary and illegal restrictions that have been placed upon me, in a different shape, at the expiration of my imprisonment. I have thought it my duty, as a matter of candour, to make my intention known, because it will rest with the authorities of the Gaol, between this day and Monday, to say, whether they will supersede the necessity of my application; and in default thereof, I must request that a Commissioner be admitted to me on Monday the 10th Inst. for the purpose of making the necessary affidavit; which affidavit, any person appointed by the authorities of the Gaol shall be at liberty to copy, as cause must necessarily be shewn against the rule within the present term.

The ground work of my application will be that Mrs. Carlile has suffered very severely from the close nature of her confinement during the months of her pregnancy, and that it is impossible, if her health and the health of her infant be regarded, that she should be confined to walk at stated hours, and be exposed to a burning sun in the middle part of the day.

The same is the case of my sister; her health has been materi-

ally injured from the close nature of her confinement: and although our condition is improved by having the use of two rooms: yet, to be confined within those rooms, where a constant fire is kept up necessarily, and where we are now continually panting and almost fainting for want of air during these severely hot days, is sufficient to destroy the strongest constitution.

Important to me as is the preservation of the health of my family, I should hesitate to make this application if I saw in the object sought any moral obstacle, any thing inconsistent with the good order of the Gaol: or, in fact, any thing beyond the mere personal prejudices of the Visiting Magistrates: to which alone I attribute all the unwarrantable restrictions that I and my family have received; and which are not, or ought not to be, the law of this country, or even of this Gaol.

Through this medium, Mrs. Carlile joins with me in asking the favour that our two eldest boys may remain with us in the Gaol during the ensuing, as at the last Midsummer, vacation.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

R. CARLILE.

The motion was made by Mr. Evans; but the Judges thought that nothing too bad could befall the Carliles: and so the matter dropped: simply because old Holroyd said it was possible that our conduct in the Gaol had provoked such restrictions. Our judges are not quite blind: but they keep a very convenient blind eye for a particular side. If the matter be fairly looked into, Holroyd deserved hanging: because, the motion was for a rule to call upon the authorities of the Gaol to shew cause: why such unusual restrictions were imposed. He had no business to suppose them capable of justification, and so to have dismissed the motion, until they had shewn that justification. But the name was *Carlile*, which has become a terrible sound to all corrupt ears, particularly to Parson Radford of Lapford, near Exeter*.

* I will give a trifle to be told, if ever this Parson Radford was Vicar or Rector of Trinity Church in Exeter. I recollect well, when I was there, the Parson of that Church was detected in keeping a Ganymede, and was obliged to retire to some country living. I have a strong notion that his name was Radford. I recollect the person I mean, well: he used to wear spectacles continually, as being very near sighted. I beg some one to give me information on this subject. The matter was current: but it would have been blasphemy a dozen years ago to have indicted a clergyman for that offence, as it has been held to be a part of orthodoxy; and so every one thought it best to let the matter drop, as the fellow had absconded from the city. At a Pitt Club dinner in Exeter, he has lately said, that Carlile, Hone and Cobbett, were scoundrels and wretches. What more desirable: what can excel the abuse of a Priest! and such a Priest!

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Nothing particular happened from this time till December. My sister had the room appointed for her sole use, from which she had been first driven, and all went on well, except the close locking up within these two rooms. In December, the Gaoler being ill, a deputy was appointed for a time: and as I particularly wanted an interview with William Tanbridge and James Watson, I addressed the following satirical note to the new Gaoler.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, Dec. 14, 1822.

A RULE of the Visiting Magistrates or Keeper of this Gaol, for the purpose of trying the extent of my powers of knowledge, has imposed upon me the task to predict, and acquaint them of that prediction, the intended application of any friend to see me in this Gaol. As I do not yet pretend to have prophetic inspirations, I have found this a difficult rule to comply with, and I have reasons to think, that, I have lost the sight and assistance of many valuable friends in consequence of this curious and questionable magisterial measure. However, as I have yet some few persons in my employ; I can predict the arrival of two of them, in the two following weeks, to assist me and receive instructions on matters connected with my business. James Watson will arrive on Monday morning, and William Tunbridge the following week, whose admittance to my apartment I now request.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

RICHARD CARLILE.

To Mr. Sherring, Deputy Keeper
of the Gaol of Dorchester.

I had not dreamt that this letter would occasion any thing more than a laugh on the part of their Worships and Reverences; but it seems that they took it in serious mood and sent me the following minute.

December 18, 1822.

It having appeared by a letter addressed by Mr. Carlile to the Deputy Keeper of the Gaol, dated 14th December, 1822, that he entertains suspicions that persons whom he might have wished to have communicated with, have been refused admission to him; the Visiting Magistrates have ascertained, that the Rule with regard to persons applying to see Mr. Carlile was laid down soon after he was committed to this prison, was only given verbally to Mr. Andrews, was announced to Mr. Carlile, and was intended, as well to prevent unpleasant intrusions upon him, for the gratification of idle curiosity as to, preserve regularity in the Gaol. The Rule was to this effect:—

"That Mr. Carlile should communicate to Mr. Andrews the names of any persons whom he might expect to call upon him, who should then be admitted at any time, during the hours appointed for the reception of the friends of prisoners, and that if any other persons should call, and ask to see him, whose names had not been so notified to Mr. Andrews, Mr. Carlile should be made acquainted therewith, and that it should be at his option to see them or not."

If, in any instance, there has been any deviation from this Rule, it has not taken place with the concurrence of the Visiting Magistrates, and to prevent any misapprehension on the subject in future, the Rule is now entered on the minutes, and is meant to apply to Mrs. and Miss Carlile, as well as to himself, and a copy of the whole of this minute, is hereby directed to be delivered to him.

(Signed)

W. M. PITT.

W. ENGLAND.

C. B. WOLLASTON.

I had thought their Worships and Reverences, men equal to any piece of meanness or villainy, but I had not thought them capable of such a flagrant attempt at falsehood, to excuse and justify themselves, as this minute exhibits. The fact was: the Gaoler was thought to be knocked up, and never likely again to return to his office. There were symptoms of insanity and I know not what other complaints: and it seems, that their Worships and Reverences had rather hastily thought to represent him (the Gaoler) as the cause of all my grievances. This will be clearly shewn by the sequel.

On the receipt of this minute, I expressed my astonishment to Mr. Sherring, at the falsehood of its contents: and he was equally surprised at hearing what he did hear. His manners were those of a sensible and humane man; and quite a contrast to those of their worships, their Reverences, and the real Gaoler. He was evidently a stranger, alike to the abuses of a Gaol, and to the shuffling meanness and tyranny of those who had been its managers.

The first thing I did, on reading the minute, was to send for a visiting magistrate. William Morton Pitt came. I exhibited the falsehood of the minute; stated cases which gave the lie direct to it; in one of which he had been personally concerned; and requested that it might be erased from the order book. He shuffled a long while: was sorry there had been any misunderstanding: but would not promise to pronounce the minute a falsehood.

The following month January, 1823, the whole of the Visiting Magistrates made their quarterly visit. I challenged them all with the falsehood of the minute: made the Archdeacon (England) sensible to his face that he was an infamous liar: but no promise could I get that the preamble of the minute should be erased. This was the only time that I had any thing like a war of words with their Worships and Reverences: as I generally answer them with: "I have nothing to say to you:" knowing that a silent contempt is the best treatment for a mean man or body of men. The following correspondence resulted from the squabble.

TO MR. CARLILE.

THE Visiting Magistrates are desirous that Mr. Carlile would state distinctly in writing the objection he has to the Preamble of the Rule entered on the minute book on the 18th of December last, and communicated to him.

Castle, Dorchester, January 11, 1823.

Dorchester Gaol, January 13, 1823.

PURSUANT to the request of the Visiting Magistrates, R. Carlile has made a written statement of his objection to the Preamble of a minute entered on the Gaol Book, December 18, 1822: which he particularly requests may be laid before the Magistrates at Blandford, in Session for the whole County, in the present week, as one of them (Mr. Brown) was avowedly ignorant of the treatment Prisoner had received.

To the Visiting Magistrates for the
County Gaol of Dorchester.

Richard Carlile, who has the misfortune to be a Prisoner in Dorchester Gaol, because he entertains and has published opinions which he can find no one to shew him to be wrong, calls upon the Visiting Magistrates of the Gaol to erase from their Minute Book, so much of a minute entered on the 18th day of December, 1822, as is comprised in the following words:

"The visiting Magistrates have ascertained that the rule with regard to persons applying to see Mr. Carlile was laid down soon after he was committed to this prison, was only given verbally to Mr. Andrews, was announced to Mr. Carlile, and was intended as well to prevent unpleasant intrusions upon him for the gratification of idle curiosity, as to preserve regularity in the Gaol. The Rule was to this effect:"

The Prisoner does not wish the rule itself, as it now stands, to be erased, as it expresses every thing he could wish for the future in regard to his visitors: he only wishes that it had been on the Minute Book three years earlier; as it would have redounded much to the honour and the humanity of the Visiting Magistrates, and have filled the prisoner with such respectful and grateful feelings towards them, as he has never yet been able to feel from the absence of the necessary impulse, and from a conviction, that in some measure individually, and in some measure collectively, they have done every thing in their power to annoy and to injure his mind, his health, and his property.

He, Prisoner, further wishes the following part of the comment on the rule to be erased. "If in any instance there has been any deviation from this Rule, it has not taken place with the concurrence of the Visiting Magistrates."

His reasons for asking this erasure are, that so much of the minute as is here set forth, contains that which is not true, and that which the Visiting Magistrates who signed their names to it must have known not to be true. To prisoner it appears an attempt on the part of the Magistrates to make their treatment of him look like a very different thing to what it has practically been. This is warranted by the following statement of facts:

Prisoner reached Dorchester Gaol on the 18th day of November, 1819. On the 20th, in the evening, the Keeper (Mr. Andrews) communicated to the Prisoner, that the Visiting Magistrates had ordered that he, the Prisoner, should be allowed to walk in the open air *one hour at a time every alternate day under a guard.* (A species of rigour and cruelty unparalleled in a case of misdemeanor, or what is less, in a case of libel on a public institution, beyond the walls of Dorchester Gaol.) Not a word was said about visitors, as Prisoner had no idea but he was to see whomsoever called to see him, which he had learnt from the Keeper was the case with Mr. White, Mr. Gilbert Wakefield, and others who had been sent from the Court of King's Bench, in cases of Libel, to fill out a period of imprisonment in this Gaol.

In the month of December, and on the ninth day of that month, Prisoner was walking in the Garden with the Keeper, and having expected, for some days, the visit of a cousin, passing from Plymouth to London, asked the keeper on what terms he (the Prisoner) was situated with regard to visitors, and whether whomsoever called would be admitted? He received for answer, *an affirmative*, and that, free admission to all friends would be given as in other cases of misdemeanor.

Prisoner, having ascertained that his relative had taken the Somersetshire Road to London, was satisfied that all was right on the part of the Keeper, and by reference to a printed document dated March 13th, 1820, he finds, that he still retained the same

impressions, as to the free admissions, of such friends as might call upon him, and was not undeceived until the end of April, when by a visit from Mrs. Carlile he learned that a Barrister on the Circuit, for the Lent assize, had been refused admission; though he had stated that he was commissioned to leave money for Prisoner's use by another friend. Also that a Gentleman of the name of Constable, an American, from whom Prisoner had received considerable benefit in the way of business, and a promise of every possible assistance, had journeyed purposely from London, and was refused admittance, on the ground that Prisoner would not comply with some other rule of the Gaol, though he begged from the Keeper to be allowed but to take Prisoner by the hand in his presence. Mr. Constable wrote a statement of his interview with the Keeper at Prisoner's request, which the Keeper saw, when, it was the whim and pleasure of somebody to have Prisoner's parcels ransacked and examined, and subsequently sent his turnkey to borrow it, under the pretence of further examination as to its correctness, but so far forgot what belonged to honesty and good manners as not to return it! The Keeper is hereby called upon to produce that Paper, as a corroboration of this statement, and as evidence against the Preamble of the Rule in question.

About the same time, a first cousin of Prisoner's (by name William Dare,) called at the Gaol and was refused admittance. Prisoner's mother died in London on March 23d: he communicated the circumstance to her only surviving sister at Musberry near Axminster, which was the first intimation his mother's friends had of his situation in Dorchester Gaol. The young man who called was the son of another sister many years dead, and being on the point to leave that neighbourhood for London, he was deputed by his aunt to call and see prisoner, and get what information he could as to the cause and nature of his confinement; she, his Aunt, and the whole of his mother's relatives being ignorant that the Prisoner had changed his former occupation for that of a Bookseller. He stated the truth and the purport of his visit to the Keeper, but was refused admittance.

In neither of the three cases here mentioned did the Keeper communicate the call of the persons to the Prisoner, and after the visit of Mrs. Carlile, when Prisoner asked the Keeper the meaning of such treatment, and reminded him of his former statement in the Garden; he answered, that he could not help it, as he took nothing upon himself, but acted entirely upon the orders of the Visiting Magistrates. Prisoner replied: that he should certainly seek his remedy at law for such treatment: and the Keeper rejoined: that he (the Keeper) must look to the Visiting Magistrates to cover all the consequences.

By way of exposing the fallacy of the Keeper's excuse for his conduct, Prisoner asked him, if he, (the Keeper) was prepared to destroy him, (the Prisoner) if he had the mandate of the Visiting

Magistrates to that effect (for Prisoner has not been without his apprehensions, that the treatment he has received indicated a disposition of this kind,) he received for answer: that it would be a different case; though an admission was made, that the same rule of reasoning would apply in the one case as in the other. This conversation with the Keeper took place on the Sunday morning of May the 21st, 1820.

In the course of the same summer, Thomas Bunn, the Turnkey either came voluntarily, or was sent to Prisoner, with a most wanton falsehood. He brought in his hand a printed bill, issued by a Mr. John Phillips, a Cider Merchant, from Devonshire, to announce the sale of Cider in this neighbourhood, and stated to the Prisoner, that in the town he had met a man sticking these Bills, and had been informed with a present of one of the bills that Mr. Phillips was an old school-fellow of Mr. Carlile's, and that if he had time he would call at the Gaol, and see him.

Now the fact was, as communicated to the Prisoner in person, by Mr. John Phillips, who gained admittance into the Gaol in the summer of 1822, that he had called at the Gaol in 1820, that he had been refused admittance after the most pressing requests to see Prisoner, after giving a full account of his old acquaintance and of his present residence among all prisoners relatives and friends in Devonshire, and the only favour he could obtain at the Lodge of the Gaol was, a promise that his hand-bill should be given to the Prisoner with information of its having been left as an acknowledgement of the call after a failure to gain admittance. It would become the magistrates, who have signed their names to such a minute as the one in question, to ascertain by whose authority such a wanton falsehood was made to Prisoner.

A somewhat similar case and similar falsehood was communicated to Prisoner by the Keeper himself, in the same summer. A Mr. Bowden an old school fellow from the same neighbourhood, a Cider Merchant, on the same errand as Mr. Phillips, called at the Gaol to see Prisoner and was refused admittance; though he expressly stated, that he came with a commission at the request of Prisoner's Sister. The account which the Keeper gave of this case was, in the following words, in the afternoon of the day (a Saturday) on which Mr. Bowden had called and conversed with the Keeper at the Lodge: "Mr. Carlile, I saw a Mr. Bowden in the Street just now, who knows you, and was an old school fellow of yours, a Cider Merchant from Devonshire, he was going off by the Coach or I should have brought him in to see you. He said your sister and friends at Ashburton were all well." Suspecting the truth of this tale, Prisoner wrote to his Sister to know exactly what had passed between the Keeper and Mr. Bowden; and received in answer that she and friends were quite unhappy to think of the treatment Prisoner was receiving: that Mr. Bowden had

seen the keeper at the lodge of the Gaol, and was told there was no chance of his being able to see Prisoner: but to his great surprise, after he had paid his fare and was stepping into the mail to proceed to Devonshire, the Turnkey of the Gaol came to him, and said: he might then if he chose, be admitted into the Gaol! which he, of course, necessarily declined.

It is this species of jesuitical conduct on the part of those who have superintended the Gaol for the last three years, more than any thing else, that Prisoner complains of. Excepting the rule for Prisoner's close confinement, every thing else has been uncertainty, equivocation and meanness.

Prisoner having, in March, 1820, stated in Print, that all friends who might be passing through Dorchester would be freely admitted to see him, now thought proper to contradict that statement and expose the conduct of his Keepers.

At the visit of the Magistrates at the October Sessions, (1820) Prisoner distinctly told them, that all complaints made to them were vain and a mockery; and that he must look to some other tribunal for redress, as he understood they were personally the authors of what he had to complain about. This was not denied, nor questioned; and Prisoner has looked at the quarterly visit of the Magistrates as an idle, unmeaning ceremony.

So deep was Prisoner's conviction that the Visiting Magistrates meant his confinement to be as solitary as they could make it, that towards the close of 1820, he suffered his beard to grow for many weeks, under the certainty of having no visitors admitted. At this period, Prisoner received a visit from the Keeper; who, in the course of conversation, observed: "that a thousand persons had been refused admittance to see prisoner, and that it would keep them all employed to admit all who came to ask to see him;" but never said a word, but that he had orders to refuse all.

Up to the month of May, 1822, no one instance had occurred in which the statement of the Preamble had been acted upon, and then and since then, to the time of its being entered on the minutes, only one instance, and that the case of Mr. John Phillips and a Mr. Winsor, at their call in May, 1822.

In support of this assumption, that these deviations from the rule now laid down in writing have taken place with the concurrence of the Visiting Magistrates, Prisoner has only to remind them, that at their visit in January, 1822, he complained of the injury he had suffered in regard to the exclusion of all visitors, and stated that the peculiarity of his circumstances would require a different rule to be laid down for the future, as he would find it necessary to have personal communications with friends for the purpose of getting his fines settled by the month of November. It was then verbally acquiesced in, that every respectable person who made application should be admitted into Prisoner's room: and the use of the word *respectable* was defined to express the ex-

clusion of all idle persons, who came only to gratify a curiosity. Prisoner was fully satisfied with this rule: but to his astonishment he found it was violated both by Magistrates and Keeper within a week or two.

A Mr. John Whicker, a Malster, of Portersham had been in company with a particular friend of the Prisoner in London, and was requested to call and see him, and to be the bearer of a sovereign and a message. He was refused admittance by the Keeper. He went to Mr. Pitt at Kingston House for an order, saw him and was sent to Dr. England, whence it appears he was dismissed very abruptly and refused all sight of Prisoner. The same Gentleman has a second time, in the course of last year asked for admittance, but without effect: nor was it communicated to Prisoner that Mr. Whicker had desired to see him, until the information was obtained by letter. A similar case was that of a Mr. Marrian, a Brewer of Birmingham. Intending to spend a few weeks at Weymouth for the benefit of his health, he was requested by some friends at Birmingham to have an interview with Prisoner. He came from Weymouth on purpose, was refused admittance at the Gate, though he said that he begged it in the most imploring manner. The Keeper was confined to his Chamber; and the turnkey was pressed to go to him a second time: but in vain. On returning to the Antelope Inn much disappointed, accompanied by a Mr. Stent the Book-keeper, and relative to the proprietor of the Inn, his attention was pointed to Dr. England by Mr. Stent, as one of the Visiting Magistrates. He asked Dr. England for an order, with a full explanation of the purport of his visit and met a second refusal. Dr. England has pleaded a bad memory to this circumstance though it occurred in September last: but Mr. Marrian informed Prisoner that the Mr. Stent who accompanied him would attest the matter upon oath. These two cases are direct proofs that Dr. England must have known the minute was not a correct statement when he signed it: and the whole of the facts here stated, which it is probable will be hereafter supported by oath in a Court of Law, are not only collateral evidences, but corroborating proofs, that so much of the minute as the Prisoner wishes to have rescinded is not true, and as such, upon all moral and magisterial grounds, ought to be rescinded.

Prisoner has also learnt that it was published throughout this and neighbouring counties, that no visitors were admitted to see him. A very particular friend in London has been debarred from visiting Prisoner, from no other reason than the uncertainty of gaining admission after making the journey. Many intimate friends with whom Prisoner corresponds have come from different and distant parts of the county to Ilchester, to visit Mr. Hunt, and fully intended coming to Dorchester; but were told, at the former place, that it would be vain, as no admission would be

obtained to the Gaol. Two other instances have come within Prisoner's knowledge of the effects of such reports. By a letter which Prisoner received from a Mr. J. B. Smith, of Bradford, Yorkshire, last summer, he was informed, that he, Mr. S., had journeyed in January, 1820, so far as Salisbury, where he was assured that it was vain to proceed to Dorchester, as many friends had been to see Prisoner from that neighbourhood, and had been refused at the gate of the Gaol. A Mr. George Broughton, of Portsea, with whom Prisoner is acquainted, had business at Poole last summer, and fully intended coming to Dorchester, but was told at Poole that it would be vain, as it was well known there that no visitors were admitted to see Prisoner.

When Prisoner wrote his Letter to Mr. Sherring, he had no idea that it would lead to any thing more than a simple compliance with its request. To Mr. Sherring, as a new Keeper, it appeared to Prisoner, that such a letter was necessary to make him understand the matter, or what was there set forth as a curious and questionable Magisterial measure. Mr. Sherring might have borne witness with what surprise Prisoner received the copy of the minute, and with what more than surprise he read the contents of it. Prisoner is assured that no such a minute would have found its way on the book, if Mr. Andrews had been at home. He has felt it his duty to make this exposition on the matter, as the idea of a rule made for a prisoner, after the period of the imprisonment to which he was sentenced had expired, and a rule that was made retrospective, so as to embrace the whole period of a three years imprisonment, setting forth that which was notoriously untrue, appeared to him to be for a double, a doubtful, and a sinister purpose: and the furnishing Prisoner with a copy in a manner so unlike whatever has been done before, startled an instant suspicion that all was not right and well meant, and that the object was to obtain his acquiescence or silence on a document that would have hereafter shut him out from all remedy for the wrongs he considers he has sustained at the hands of those who form the executive and administrative powers for Dorchester Goal.

Prisoner would have been happy to have borne testimony to a more dignified, more honourable, and more humane conduct on the part of his Keepers: for though it makes no part of his creed to profess to love his enemies, he is ever ready to give them praise where it is due: and he hopes, that, if the reign of Christian Persecution should last so long, as that another hapless Bookseller should have to go through another three years imprisonment, for selling a book that admits no answer but that of persecution, the Visiting Magistrates will so regulate his treatment from the first, that they will not shrink from, nor be ashamed to acknowledge it in the end.

Dorchester Gaol, January 13, 1823.

REPLY TO MR. CARLILE'S LETTER AND NOTE OF
THE 13TH OF JANUARY, 1823.

MR. CARLILE seems to have misconceived the meaning of the minute of the 18th of December last. The Rule to be observed, relative to his intercourse with his friends, was not entered on the minutes, but the Visiting Magistrates have ascertained, on the recollection of all their present and late colleagues, whom they have had the opportunity of consulting, as well as of other county magistrates, that as soon as they were apprized of the nature of his case, the course resolved upon to be pursued, was as stated in that minute. They presumed that it had been so understood by the Gaoler, and that it had been communicated to Mr. Carlile, nor do they recollect an instance of his mentioning, at any of their quarterly visits, previous to January, 1822, any difficulties as to seeing his friends, nor till the 14th of December last did he speak of the exclusion of friends as a specific ground of complaint*. From a wish to satisfy his mind, that minute of the 18th of December was drawn up, and a copy of it delivered to him, as well as to prevent any deviation from the system in future. And it was the more necessary, as the Gaoler at that time was ill and absent, and as the person appointed to act as temporary Gaoler, had no recorded written rule for his government on this subject.

From the absence of the Gaoler, Mr. Andrews, and the state of his health, no reference could be made to him, but it now appears, on his return home, that he had conceived the rule to extend no further, than that Mr. Carlile might receive visits from those friends, whose names he might at any time announce to the Gaoler as intending to call upon him; and none such (as the Visiting Magistrates understood) have ever been refused. Mr. Carlile has in many instances put it to the proof, and lately again in the case of Mr. Tunbridge and another. In *other* respects the Gaoler understood Mr. Carlile to stand precisely in the same situation, in regard to seeing friends, as any other person convicted of a misdemeanor. The rule of this Gaol, sanctioned by the Judges, states as to such persons, that "their friends shall, at the discretion of the Gaoler, or by order of a Visiting Justice, have more frequent and longer access to them" than was laid down as to persons convicted of felony. In cases of doubt, or if desirous of avoiding personal responsibility, the Gaoler cannot be blamed; (under his impression as to the rule) for referring persons, inquiring for Mr. Carlile, and whose names had not been transmitted to him, to make application to a Visiting Magistrate. Mr. Carlile's correspondence has been under no limitations, any person, known to him, and desirous of seeing him might have written a note to

* See the Letter to Mr. White the Sheriff!

him, and if *he* thought fit to receive their visits, he had only to signify such desire to the Gaoler. Perhaps in a very few instances, *from misapprehension*, he may not have seen a person inquiring for him, but it cannot be denied, that even on the line adopted in practice, (though falling short of the intention of the Visiting Magistrates) Mr. Carlile has experienced a treatment more favourable, in this respect, than any other prisoner convicted of a misdemeanor, and that the general rule has been considerably extended for his accommodation.

Mr. Carlile states, that in October, 1820, he had represented to the Visiting Magistrates that "all complaints to them were vain," &c. and that he had repeatedly since expressed himself to the same effect. It is perfectly in the recollection of the Magistrates then present, as well as in several other instances, (although after stating, that he had at such times no particular complaint * to make) that he has used strong general terms of invective against the rigorous treatment he has experienced and as differing from that of others convicted of misdemeanors. The only difference in fact has been, that Mr. Carlile has not been allowed access, during the day, to the Day Room and Court allotted to others convicted of misdemeanors, or any communication with other prisoners. This restriction was the same adopted in the case of Mr. Henry White in the year 1808. On the other hand, instead of stone cells, without fire-places, and with iron bedsteads, Mr. Carlile and his family have been indulged with comfortable apartments, which he has fitted up at his own discretion.

He further notices in his letter, that in January, 1822, he had stated to the Visiting Magistrates, that the peculiarity of his situation rendered personal communication with friends necessary, with a view to providing for the fines imposed upon him, that he asked whether he might receive them in his room, and said he had missed opportunities of seeing some persons who would have called upon him, had they not had doubts touching their admission. The Gaoler was immediately told, that any person coming to him on such business was unquestionably to be admitted to him in his own apartment without hesitation, and in his own letter he acknowledges that this request was acquiesced in. They considered this notification more as an observation, connected with his alleged hardships in the seizure of his property, than as a request for an extension of privileges. As to the applications he represents to have been made to the Rev. Dr. England, if those applications appeared to that Gentleman to arise from motives of mere curiosity in the parties, and without any communication with Mr. Carlile himself, (which was always within their reach by note or letter) it accounts for such applications not having been complied with.

* No new complaint was always the word when any thing was said about complaint.

Lastly, when the Magistrates called on Mr. Carlile on the 11th instant, he avowed a claim (his sentence as to term of imprisonment having expired) to a more unlimited degree of indulgence, namely, that he might be permitted to walk out, unaccompanied, and at his discretion, at any time, and for any length of time. They replied that his application should be taken into consideration; his claim was communicated to the Court of Quarter Sessions. Sanctioned by the opinion of that Court, the Visiting Magistrates have only to announce to Mr. Carlile, that no further indulgence can be granted, than has been already notified to him, and that their duty calls upon them effectually to prevent the possibility of his having the means in his power, of holding intercourse, or communicating, with any other prisoner.

W. M. PITT.

C. B. WOLLASTON.

J. M. COLSON.

W. ENGLAND.

T. B. BOWER.

February 3, 1823.

It may be seen by the date, that three weeks elapsed before I received the reply; which is as full of falsehood as the minute by which it originated. So far from my having been more indulged as to visitors than any other person confined for misdemeanor, for the first two years I had not one admitted, beyond my own family and a friend who once came with Mrs. Carlile. But my statement exhibits the falsehood of the thing completely: and how they could make such a reply without attempting to rebut the allegations of that statement, I leave to them to explain. The reply is a shuffle, and false at every point. I complained to the Sheriff in 1821, that I had not fair play as to visitors, in the presence of the Gaoler. The Gaoler himself told me in November 1820 that he could admit none without an order from a visiting Magistrate. He all but insulted a Magistrate, who, though belonging to the county, was not known at the Gaol, for persisting in coming to my room in April 1820.

As to the treatment of Mr. White, I know well, that he had no such restrictions as to visitors: whether he was content with the half hour a day in the open air I cannot say: but I have heard the Surgeon say, that Mr. White was in a very bad state of health throughout his imprisonment: no small portion of which may have been attributed to close confinement.

What is said about the comfortable apartments, the stone cells, &c., is an outrage. Every prisoner in the place, whatever his offence, unless sentenced to solitary confinement, has a sleeping cell, a day room where there is a fire, and a good yard to walk in paved with flag stones. We on the other hand, have had a better room; but it has been both day room and night room, in which we were constantly locked: and if we had an advantage over the other prisoners in the winter, they had a most decided advantage over us in the summer: as to the fitting up part, I had a difficulty to get a board put up to form a Coal Hole: nor was it done until three bushels of coals were strewed upon the floor! Though I offered to pay for it, and did pay for it, the Gaoler said he could not order it without an order from the Visiting Magistrates! So much for the fitting up! That was all the fitting up that I had done, and when Mrs. Carlile came, two or three curtains were hung. Mr. White papered the room; but I had no taste for embellishing a room that I might be turned out of at another man's discretion, and at a moment's notice: which has just been the case with my sister and her comfortable apartment. She is now turned into the cell of a felon again, and not allowed the felon's day room, nor the felon's yard to walk in.

I made no answer to the Reply of their Worships and Reverences. The thing thing appeared to me too wanton and wicked to deserve further notice: but from that time to this, I have been a close chamber prisoner; and now still more than ever, as I am locked into one room.

My next motion was the following letter about the flogging.

TO A VISITING MAGISTRATE OF THE COUNTY GAOL
OF DORCHESTER.

SIR,

March 1, 1823.

I AM about to ask a very unusual, and I dare say, an unexpected favour. Since I have been in this Gaol, I have busied myself but very little about the treatment of the Prisoners; not having been an eye witness to many things that were matters of serious complaint. But the agonized and agonizing screams that have reached me under the cruel and brutal floggings that take place here, have successively commanded me to raise my voice against such barbarities, convinced, as I am, that they do not tend to mend the character of the sufferers; and convinced, as I am, that no crime can *morally* warrant that or any other species of bodily torture that is not intended to inflict instant death.

I view the matter as a relic of the old system of torture; and I am satisfied, that the men who now order and countenance the one would have participated with equal complacency in the infliction of the worst part of the other that ever was practised.

I have therefore resolved, that, it is my duty, having the means, to bring the matter before the Parliament by Petition; and I ask to be allowed this day, or to-morrow, an interview, with the boy who was so cruelly, so brutally flogged this morning; that I may become acquainted with his name, age, and connections, and the present effect of his sufferings.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
RICHARD CARLILE.

I got no answer to this letter. The Petition was presented by Mr. Bennett, a copy of which may be found in No. 13, Vol. 7.

The new Sheriff for this year never came near me at his taking possession of the Gaol: and at the close of the assize in March, I sent him the following letter.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, March, 1823.

As I have not had the satisfaction of seeing you in the Gaol according to the custom and duty of your office, to enable me to make my complaint of improper treatment to you in person, I beg leave to caution you against any representations on that treatment you may receive from the Gaoler or Visiting Magistrates; as I have reasons to think that they have imposed upon the Sheriffs and Magistracy of this county from time to time, as to the nature of that treatment.

I complain of too close a confinement to one room, not being allowed to walk out more than two hours in a day, then only when the weather and the convenience of the Keeper to send a watch permit, and that under circumstances which no man of spirit would accept, particularly one who feels as I feel, free from all imputation of crime, or misdemeanor, or any kind of violation of the laws of the country.

I complain also of a capricious and illegal exclusion of friends as visitors, having existed under every other Shrievalty since I have been here, to my great injury.

Since the 16th November last, I consider myself to have been a prisoner for nothing more than a debt to the Crown, and that under the circumstances, of the Officers of the Crown holding a property of mine of more value than that debt, wherewith to pay themselves. Being your prisoner during the remainder of my confinement and your Shrievalty, I demand from you that treat-

ment which the Rules of the Prison and the laws of the country award to Debtors in confinement.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

RICHARD CARLILE.

To Henry Charles Sturt, Esq.
High Sheriff for the County of Dorset.

This letter was delivered on a saturday, and on the sunday morning, the Sheriff came with a friend, whom I discovered to be a Lord, after I had been told so, (Lord Ashley). I have nothing to say against Lord Ashley; but it is a pity that these people cannot put on some distinguishing mark: for had I not so been told, I should not have known that I had been honoured with the visit of a Lord. The sheriff was not pleased at my sending for him: said he had been in the Gaol before, and did not wish to intrude upon me. His conscience would not allow him to change my treatment. He came again at the Lammas Assize, and brought his Lady with him: a noble woman of most amiable manners: but the conscience of Mr. Sturt had not changed.

The next salute was to the Gaoler, as follows: to which I had no answer.

TO MR. ROBERT WILLIAMS ANDREWS, KEEPER OF
DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR, Dorchester Gaol, June, 1823.

On my sister going to her window this morning, she saw deposited on the outer lodge, a printed pamphlet, purporting to be the rules of this Gaol, sanctioned by Judges Wood and Bailey in the year 1810. By one part of those rules, I perceive, you are required to make them known to the Prisoners, who may be successively in your keeping, at least, so far as those rules concern those prisoners. Now, I cannot but think it a dereliction of duty on your part, that I have been one and forty months in this Gaol, and never before this morning knew that there existed such rules as a reciprocal guide for the conduct of the prisoners and the officers of the Prison.

As I find, that the more wholesome part of those rules has been completely departed from in the management of the Gaol, during my confinement in it, I beg leave to enquire from you if those rules have been superseded by any set of rules of a subsequent date: and if so, may I be permitted to be made acquainted with them. I have always considered it a matter of serious complaint, that there were no such rules: as I have never had any under-

standing but that the management of the Gaol changed with the whims and discretion of the different Visiting Magistrates.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

RICHARD CARLILE.

An Act of Parliament having been made in the last session, for the better regulation of Gaols, I looked for the first of September with a hope that I should get more range: but my change is for the worse! I addressed the following letter to the Visiting Magistrates, and received the following answer from the Keeper.

TO THE VISITING MAGISTRATES OF THE COUNTY
GAOL OF DORCHESTER.

GENTLEMEN,

Dorchester Gaol, Sept. 2, 1823.

By an Act of the Parliament which came into operation yesterday, I find it is no longer lawful to torture Prisoners to death; and that "All Prisoners shall be allowed as much air and exercise as may be deemed proper for their health."

Pursuant to this Act, I call upon you to remove those restrictions which prevent my taking sufficient air and exercise for the preservation of my health, which I have never yet had in this Gaol. And I beg you to reflect, that though four months of close confinement as I have passed may not do a serious injury to a man's health, still four years would destroy the strongest constitution. With all the care as to diet and abstinence from superfluities that I can use, I find that I am rotting, and in a state of general bodily decay and weakness, and this wholly from a confinement, which I can look at in no other light than as an attempt to deprive me of life prematurely.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,

RICHARD CARLILE.

TO MR. CARLILE.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Visiting Justices, to state to you, in answer to your letter of the 2d Inst. addressed to them, that your being deprived of air and exercise, is entirely owing to yourself, in consequence of your refusing to comply with those terms, upon which alone, consistently with their duty, they can allow of your walking in the court of the prison.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

R. W. ANDREWS.

Cardie, Dorchester, Sept. 6, 1823.

The following day I wrote to Mr. Peel as follows:

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, September 7, 1823.

As the Secretary of State for the Home Department is the superintendent of the management of all the Gaols in the country; and as you are sojourning within a few miles of this Gaol: I invite you to come, and to see the real manner in which I and my sister are and have been treated.

With an imprisonment so lengthened as to the past, and unlimited as the future, the treatment we receive is tantamount to premeditated assassination: and that of the worst kind: because, the process is slow and tortuous.

You may, at the same time, personally ascertain that the managers of this Gaol feel themselves competent to dispense with the provisions of the New Gaol Regulation Act of Parliament, in continuing irons on some of the prisoners. I know of no particulars; but I hear several men come into the Chapel every morning with clanking irons, to hear the Chaplain read and pray: and this has continued from the first: so I conclude the irons have not been replaced from any misconduct during the past week: and if I read the act rightly, no other cause can be a cause sufficient.

I am Sir, your obedient Servant,

RICHARD CARLILE.

To the Right Honourable Robert Peel,
Lulworth Castle.

I have not seen or heard from the Secretary of Gaols!

The next thing that came up was that my sister was to be separated from me. At first, it was that proposed to put her in a room called the *Iron Room*! A most solitary and unwholesome place. She was sent for by two of the Magistrates, who began a great deal of palaver about their desire to make her comfortable; and that was: they wanted her room for other prisoners, and wished her to put up with this *iron room* by night, and to be locked up in my room by day!

My sister came back terribly frightened at the proposition: and I wrote the following letter.

TO WILLIAM MORTON PITT, ESQ., VISITING MAGISTRATE FOR DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, Sept. 23, 1823.

At the request of my sister, I address you to ask, that you will be pleased to communicate to her, through the Matron, what is to be the nature of her treatment in this Gaol after thursday next; as

she has been ordered to prepare for a change, and the Matron who has communicated that order, pleads ignorance of what that change is to be.

To any change that shall expose her to such treatment as she received on her first coming to this Gaol she opposes her protest and will not submit. She was then treated worse than any convicted felon in the Gaol, by being shut up at dusk in a cell, into which both wind and rain was constantly pouring upon her, whilst she lay on her iron bed: and whilst the female prisoners in that ward had access to each other throughout the night, she was so closely bolted on the door side, that it was next to a miracle she escaped suffocation at the time of the chimney taking fire; and which she did escape to hear such brutal taunts and insolence from the Gaoler as to throw her into fits.

The treatment which she has received altogether, with the exception of her occupation of her present room, has been of the vilest kind. For months she was locked up in the same room with myself and wife, where we had to attend to every call of nature in the presence of each other, if we could no longer resist the torture occasioned by not attending. This single circumstance was really dreadful, and produced a torture which cannot be described; for, she had been accustomed to observe a delicacy that was wounded at the thought of any deviation from it.

You, Mr. Pitt, claim to be considered a religious and humane man. You preside at Bible Society Meetings, and at almost every thing that is called humane and charitable in this county: but I ask you, how your professions in that respect can be made to tally with the treatment you have shewn to me and my family in this Gaol? Mrs. Carlile suffered a martyrdom throughout her pregnancy, from the close nature of her confinement: and a brutality from the authorities of the Gaol, not exceeded in any Gaol in this country, was her lot throughout her imprisonment.

I know an excuse has been made, that you and your brother Magistrates do not think it proper that we should come in contact with any other prisoners: and that we were calculated to corrupt them! To whomsoever has made this imputation of corrupting the prisoners, I throw it back in his face with merited contempt, and say, that, I, or any one of my family, is as moral, and as little likely, perhaps less, to corrupt a prisoner, as himself. To the other point of separation, it could not have been more agreeable to any one than to myself to be kept separate from other prisoners.

Happy should I have been if I could have inhabited some corner of the Gaol, been allowed my own assistant to supply my few wants from the town and never to have come into contact with prisoners or keepers. I desire the company of the one, as little as that of the other, and of both none at all; for sure I am that I cannot improve by either.

The present Chaplain is the only moral man we have got or have

had about the Gaol since I have been here, whose conduct has come under my observation: and, with the exception of Mr. Wood's present exertions, but very little, and none that I know, of moral instruction, has been communicated to the Prisoners within the last four years. Had even the attempt been made, something of it must have passed under my notice; but, I declare, before you who have been a Visiting Magistrate throughout that time, that I have seen nor heard of any thing of the kind: unless the lash is to be considered the proper moral corrective.

If it has been so considered, I lament alike the error on one side, and the torture suffered on the other: for never will morality be communicated by other than moral means. Terror and torture may teach caution, cunning, and hypocrisy; but moral instruction is alone calculated to correct the diseases of the human mind.

I write under wounded feelings. I see my sister so terrified at the thought of being put into those gloomy, unwholesome, and ill-situated iron rooms over the Cook House, that she has taken ill at it. Although, your Surgeon may not be able to judge of her distracted mind: it is perfectly within my knowledge, that her health is in such a state as will not admit of her mind being sported with. She wants consolation; that consolation which agreeable company affords; and to put her into any thing like solitary confinement again will be nothing short of assassination.

I also protest against any thing of the kind. I dare any man to prove that either of us has violated the law or the morals of the country: and I do not see why we should, beyond our lengthened, close, and undeserved imprisonment, be subjected to, or suffer from, the prejudice or the malice of any person who may have power over us.

I trust I have said enough to convince you that decency on the one hand forbids you to lock us up in one room by day; and humanity on the other, to send my sister into a lonely part of the prison to pass the ensuing winter nights.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
RICHARD CARLILE.

She had been ordered to prepare to move on the 25th: but this letter stayed it for a consultation of the Magistrates on saturday the 27th. The result was that the first order was to be enforced; and she was to take her choice of the iron room, or to be locked up separate from the felons in a felon's cell on monday the 29th. She told the Gaoler she would make no choice: and yesterday she was taken from me; but not until I had sent the following note.

TO MR. R. W. ANDREWS, KEEPER OF DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, September 29, 1823.

As I am informed, it is determined that my sister shall be separated from me this day; I beg you to be prepared to find her fire and food, so long as she is kept separate. I would have done my best to support her, whilst she was with me, but as she is to be removed, and as she has no kind of property, I look to you and the Visiting Magistrates to maintain her.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

R. CARLILE.

The answer to this note was, that she should have her meals sent from the Gaoler's Table and be made as comfortable as possible under the change: the result of which shall be duly communicated*.

Here, Inhabitants of Dorset, you have a fair description of the treatment I and my family have had in your Gaol of Dorchester. You have the names of the Visiting Magistrates. Many little things have occurred which I have printed before, and have not now mentioned. My next shall communicate to you what I have done and am doing to merit such persecution. For the present I take my leave, and recommend you to prepare for the reception of some new ideas that shall make you discover that you have been sadly imposed upon by the HIGH BLOOD, as I hear their Worships and Reverences often called by ——— not by

RICHARD CARLILE.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,

Plymouth, Sept. 15, 1823.

SEVERAL persons at Plymouth who are friends to free discussion, hope you will accept their thanks for the noble stand you have made against despotism, kingcraft, and priestcraft in all their gilded but really hideous branches. They also hope you will be pleased to receive their pecuniary mites as testimonies of their sincere gratitude, and as trifles towards remunerating you for the tyrannical treatment you have suffered during the last four years, from gangs of fawning Aristocrats, gloomy Bigots, and base hypocrites, who have leagued together for the sole purpose of enslaving both body and mind. But who it is hoped will ere long meet with their full and just reward.

I am, Sir, your sincere well-wisher,

JOHN SMITH.

* I can, yet give no particulars of my sister's treatment, as up to the 7th October, I have not seen her so as to be able to converse with her.

J. B. S., who says the power
to think is only a curse with-
out the liberty to speak what
we think

* Snuff-Box

A Devonshire Printer

A Materialist

An Enemy to Special Juries

A Friend to the Cause

2 6

4 0

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R. S. P., who hopes the hap-
py time will soon arrive
when the aggregate of the
British People will think for
themselves, and thereby
produce the complete de-
struction of all the ramifi-
cations of baneful and be-
wildering Priestcraft

s. d.

2 6

MR. RICHARD CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

WORTHY CITIZEN,

Rippenden, Sept. 24, 1823.

WE beg your acceptance of this trifle as a token of esteem for
your firm and undaunted conduct; continue as you have begun
and there is no fear but that reason will ultimately triumph over
fiction or fable, which is the ground of all religions.

Sine pecunia non pater noster.

I remain, yours respectfully,

D. NIELD.

Left of last Subscription, June

9, 1823, 4s. 6d.: 2s. 6d. of

which was from a Mr. Ing-

ham of Elland

J. N.

4 6

1 0

J. S.

H. W.

D. Nield

Jonas Crabtree

S. Shaw

1 0

5 0

5 0

1 0

3 0

* Mr. S.

Plymouth, August 18, 1823.

"A professing Reformer, who allows bad habits is at least a suspicious, if
not a dangerous character."

Myself.

Franklin somewhere observes, that we often tax ourselves more than we
are taxed by government; whether this be true in England is a question?
one thing however is true, that we often, by thus taxing ourselves, contri-
bute towards supporting the *physical cause of taxation*. Among the articles
many tax themselves with, and which may be, and are considered, not vi-
cious, is the use of *snuff* and tobacco—it is possible that both may possess me-
dicinal properties and therefore in some cases may be of use; but in most cases
it is a mere luxury, and by no means a delicate one—especially snuff; and as
I have been in the habit of using it for many years and have so long sinned
against conviction, I consider it almost a duty to make this ample confes-
sion; and to seal my determination finally to abandon the practice, I here-
with send you my snuff-box desiring you will convert it into cash, and trans-
mit the same to R. Carlile as a token of respect for his observations upon
habits and conduct, which has mainly contributed to my present determi-
nation; by which, if I continue, I shall gain three objects, viz. overcome a
useless habit: secondly, increase the means of doing good: and lastly, dimi-
nish the source of corruption.

Perhaps this act, though trifling, may induce many to examine them-
selves and reform such habits as are either useless or injurious: one little
reform very often leads to greater ones. Yours,

PHILANTHROPIST.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

London, Sept. 31, 1823.

SIR,
 WHEN I was coming on Mr. Wheatley's coach from Greenwich, on Tuesday the 16th instant, there were five Gentlemen, in the Dickey besides me. Before the Coach started, our conversation, or rather their conversation, was on religious subjects. One Gentlemen acted like a real fanatic. Every word that he spoke, had something wild in its meaning. He said that "their preacher was a real Angel; yes, that he was as true as God is in Heaven; as true as Heaven is above; as true as Hell is below; as true as the Devil is in Hell." He went on, in this way for some time; till, at last, I put in a word. I said, Sir, I am, almost, a sceptic in religious matters. But, perhaps, it is a very fortunate thing, that I have fallen into your company. You may convince me that I am in error; therefore will you have the goodness to inform me, where Heaven is? One of them said, what an ignorant man to ask that question! Yes, said I, I am sensible of my ignorance. I want to gain knowledge; therefore I shall be very much obliged, if you, or any one of you, will answer my question. I will answer your question, said one of them; Heaven is there, pointing his finger above. And where is Hell said I? O! that is under our feet. Pray, Sir, said I, how far may we dig before we get to it? No answer! You have, Sir, said that Heaven is above. Where does Heaven go to at night? Because that part, which is over our heads in the day, is under our feet at night. No answer! Now, Sir, if this is not the case, all the Astronomers have told us a great many falsehoods. But, said I, the Astronomers have not told us a falsehood, in this case, at any rate; because we may see the sun set in the West, and rise in the East; therefore, the sun must be under our feet at night. And, if that part which is over our heads in the day, goes under our feet at night, I would as soon go to Hell as to Heaven; because according to your account, they change alternately; therefore one place must be as good as the other. No answer! Except one of them said, we must believe what the *Bible* says! Very well, Sir, said I, you believe in the Bible do you? Then, will you have the goodness to inform me, how the Black men came on to the Earth? no answer! But, one said, he supposed that I was a pupil of that RASCAL CARLILE. I said I was; but, why do you call Mr. Carlile a Rascal? Does your Parson say this? No answer: I was so enraged at this word Rascal, that I thought, that I would chuck him into the road; but, he had just before called me ignorant, and I then thought that, if I touched him, he would make me show my ignorance more than I had done, therefore I said no more! and we were close to the Elephant and Castle, where I parted with my very civil, sensible, exceedingly religious, humane, and charitable companions. I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

H.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.
LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF LONDON.

MY LORD, Dorchester Gaol, Oct. 2, 1823.
IN the 25th Chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the injunction that the Prisoner shall not be neglected is so far imperative, as to be laid down as one of the essentials to obtain salvation from everlasting torment. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for the least of these my brethren was in prison and ye visited him not, and inasmuch as ye have done it to one of these ye have done it unto me."

I have paraphrased the latter part of the sentence, but your Lordship will see that my expression is strictly that which the Evangelist puts into the mouth of Jesus Christ.

Now my Lord I understand that Christianity offers a common brotherhood to all mankind, and though I may be one of the least of that brotherhood, I feel that I have been most awfully neglected in Prison.

Come the 14th of this month, I have been four years a prisoner for my hostility towards the Christian Religion: and though I have industriously searched for a good foundation to that religion, both in relation to history and physics, throughout that imprisonment, I declare to your Lordship, that I can find none, and that if I could find such a foundation, if your Lordship or any Divine could communicate to me that good foundation, I would become as strenuous, or a more strenuous supporter, than I have been an opponent.

Under this pledge and these circumstances, being led from rumour to believe that your Lordship has assisted or been a party to my prosecution, I feel that I am entitled to instruction from your Lordship's superior knowledge; and since your Lordship is so near to this Gaol, this invitation to visit and instruct is made,

By your Lordship's most obedient Servant,
RICHARD CARLILE.

To the Right Reverend Father in
 God the Lord Bishop of London,
 Weymouth.

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